BUSINESS / B1

Tycoons Henry Sy, Andrew Tan, John Gokongwei, Ayala and Lopez groups bid for Iloilo City airport

NEWS / A2

Palace earmarks P25B more to fight hunger from proceeds of gov't's PLDT shares

Complete list of 2006 bar passers at www. inquirer.net



MALIMBAN: No. 1

MOTORING / B5

World's leading racing parts supplier gets RP partner

GMA turns 60 tomorrow but doesn't look, feel it

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SHE DOESN'T LOOK IT, DOESN'T EVEN FEEL IT.

It seems that when you have vast reserves of energy and a hard-driving work style that has forced many a Cabinet member to their sickbed, becoming a senior citizen is nothing to fret about.

That is exactly how President Macapagal-Arroyo feels about reaching a personal milestone.

GMA / A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, April 4, 2007 ** 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 117 P18 online: www.inquirer.net

Gonzalez: Ocampo given very special treatment

By Leila B. Salaverria and Christine O. Avendaño

DISAPPOINTED OVER THE SUPREME COURT decision to release Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he would order the trial of the party-list lawmaker's murder case in Leyte to proceed.

"The next course is to proceed to the trial be-

GONZALEZ A4

SC frees Satur; gov't evidence seen 'weak'



JUBILANT. Outside the Manila Police District jail, Rep. Satur Ocampo thanks his supporters for keeping vigil during his 18 days in detention.

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tina G. Santos

SCORING A VICTORY against the Arroyo administration that wanted to keep him behind bars, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo was ordered freed yesterday by the Supreme Court after posting a P300,000 cash bail.

An ecstatic Ocampo was mobbed by supporters as he walked out of the Manila Police District headquarters on United Nations Avenue in Ermita after 18 days of detention.

The high tribunal said Ocampo should be released while it was deliberating on his petition seeking the recall of his arrest warrant and questioning the multiple murder charges filed against him for his alleged involvement in the killing of suspected military spies in the Communist Party of the Philippines in the 1980s.

A jubilant crowd of flag-waving Bayan Muna members chanted "Mabuhay si Ka Satur!" as Ocampo, who raised his clenched fist in claiming victory even if only for his provisional liberty, was hustled from the police headquarters at around 2:30 p.m.

Clad in denim pants and a white Bayan Muna polo shirt, Ocampo walked with his arm around the shoulder of his wife, Carolina "Bobbie" Malay, and into the arms of his supporters and friends.

The Supreme Court did not give a reason for ordering Ocampo's provisional release, but a legal expert said detainees had been ordered released in past cases where the evidence of guilt against them was weak or insufficient.

Another lawyer of Ocampo's, Romeo Capulong, said he believed the directive

SC FREES A4

Baguio boy tops 2006 bar exams; 1,893 make it

By Leila B. Salaverria and Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TEACHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Cordilleras in Baguio City were hard put to place a face to the name Noel Neil Malimban as they excitedly received the results of the 2006 bar examinations.

Malimban, a graduate of the UC, topped the 1,893 who passed last year's bar examinations, the results of which were released by the Supreme Court last night. He got a grade of 87.4 percent.

All that UC president Reynaldo Agranzamendez could recall of Malimban was that he was "an accountant and a very unassuming fellow."

Malimban's first-place finish was so unexpected that at a management meeting just before the exam results were released, Agranzamendez had told his staff to prepare for the worst.

But Saturnino Eleazar, the UC vice president for finance, realized that Malimban actually placed 14th in the licensing examination for accountants seven years ago.

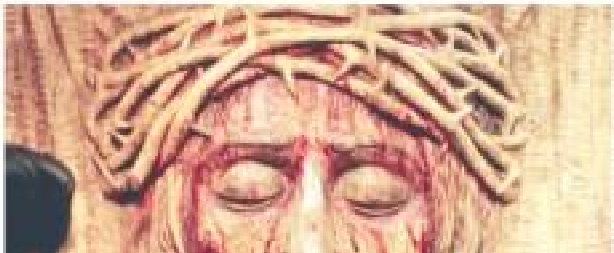
UC, formerly known as the Baguio Colleges Foundation, earned its place among the country's top law schools when another graduate, Janet Abuel, topped the 1998 bar exams.

Agranzamendez said the UC was described as a "small school" in 1998, and was often belittled for Abuel's accomplishment, which was described as a stroke of luck (tsamba).

He said Malimban had just proved their critics wrong.

"The battle cry we coined today is 'Hindi ka na nag-iisa, Janet Abuel' [You are no longer alone, Janet Abuel]," said Eleazar.

BAGUIO A6



THE FACE OF THE CRUCIFIED JESUS etched in unspeakable sorrow is carved on wood by sculptor Fred Baldemor. The huge artwork at Megamall in Mandaluyong City, on display until April 30, lends mulling some sort of meditative dimension.

Slain Indon priest came to bring peace

By Nikko Dizon

THE IRONY OF A MAN OF PEACE meeting a violent end is not lost on an Indonesian priest grieving over the brutal killing of his friend and compatriot, Fr. Fransiskus Madhu of the Divine Word Missionaries.

"A priest comes to serve and to bring peace but ends up being a victim of violence," Fr. Patrick Gaza said in an interview yesterday at the Christ the King Seminary in Quezon City.

Father Patrick said the murder of Father Fransis—as the young, energetic missionary was called—and the culture of violence which may have prompted it should be condemned.

"We should condemn his killing, and killing as a whole. It's so easy to kill, that's why we should create a peaceful environment starting with ourselves," Father Patrick said.

Father Fransis, 31, was shot allegedly by a farmer, identified by the police as Nestor Wailan, while the priest was preparing for an afternoon Palm Sunday Mass in Lubuagan, Kalinga. The assailant escaped.

SLAIN A4

Leyte villagers remember day NPAs took 36 of their relatives

By Christine O. Avendaño

MT. SACRIPANTE, HILONGOS, LEYTE—IT was a fiesta that residents of Barangay San Antonio could never forget even if it happened more than 20 years ago.

During the fiesta on June 13, 1985, and the day before, residents saw how members of the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, herded away their loved ones, as many as 36 of them, suspected of being military informants.

Their loved ones were never heard from since.

Residents of the barangay were forced yesterday to relive those awful memories when they saw skeletal remains, which they hoped were those of their loved ones.

The remains were dug up from a mass grave in Sitio Bonagon.

The burial site was said to contain the bodies of the victims of the NPA purge.

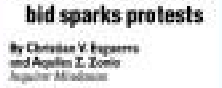
At press time, police forensic experts had been able to recover 22 skeletal remains in eight graves.

"We have been searching for our loved ones for years but we didn't know where to look," Leslie Perodo said, speaking her Waray-speaking neighbors.

The remains were scattered on the slope of this mountain, said Perodo, who was a young girl when many of her neighbors were seized by the NPA.

The relatives, with their children in tow,

LEYTE A11



Pacquiao foes retreat after news blackout bid sparks protests

By Christian V. Esguerra and Aquiles Z. Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

THE OPPOSITION WENT ON THE RETREAT yesterday after one of its lawyers' call for a ban on the showing on Philippine television of ring idol Manny Pacquiao's forthcoming fight in the United States drew howls of protest from both sides of the globe.

Pacquiao is scheduled to fight Mexico's Jorge Solis in San Antonio, Texas, on April 14 (April 15 in Manila).

United Opposition lawyer Steve Ball

PACQUIAO A4



THE GOOD FIGHT. A better life for his family was the dream of boxer Angelito Sisnorio Jr. The Sisnorio shack is in San Jose village, Koronadal City.

DFA to look into boxer's death; execs fly to Bangkok

By Cynthia D. Balana and Juan Navarro

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS yesterday pledged to look into the death in Thailand of former Filipino World Boxing Council youth flyweight titleholder Angelito "Lito" Sisnorio Jr., as his family demanded that those responsible be put in jail.

Amid cries from the boxer's family for justice, a team of officials, including North Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol, is expected to fly to Bangkok either today or tomorrow to bring back the remains of the young fighter who died of brain injuries following a fourth-round knockout to former world champion Chatchai Sasakul.

In an interview with the Inquirer, DFA

DFA TO LOOK A4



ONCE UPON A TIME. Sisnorio's dream was within his reach.

Second FrontPage

Palace eyes P25B to ease hunger

Money to come from gov't's PLDT stock sale

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG PLANS TO ALlocate the entire P25 billion in proceeds from the sale of government-sequestered shares in telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) to eradicate hunger in the country, Socioeconomic Secretary Romulo Neri said yesterday.

[illegible]



A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS

PRESIDENT ARROYO [illegible]

Bro. Mike: Elections must be credible, acceptable to people

By Julliet Labog-Javellana

[illegible]

GMA names Fil-Am printing office chief

By Julliet Labog-Javellana

[illegible]

DSWD files own charges vs hostage-taker Ducat



BULACAN DRUG BUST
Operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) inspect equipment seized from a suspected drug lab in San Luis Buenavista, San Rafael, Bulacan, yesterday morning. The lab was believed capable of producing 100kilos of shabu at a time.

Shell hikes LPG price by 56¢

By Abigail L. Ho

Cops arrest woman-suspect in Quezon House bet's slay

By Jeannette I. Andrade

Rebs kill 3 cops in Masbate raid

4 Pinoy seamen injured












Baguio boy tops bar exams





Slain Indon priest came to bring peace

Correction

Erap needs tests for heart, spine problems, says doc

By Jocelyn R. Uy



Loren partially drops election protest vs Noli

By Cynthia D. Balana

Lawyer files graft raps vs Pimentels

Comelec exec killed



SC frees Satur; gov't evidence seen to be 'weak'

Gonzalez: Ocampo 'given very special treatment'

DFA to look into boxer's death; executives fly to Bangkok

Pacquiao foes retreat after blackout bid sparks protests

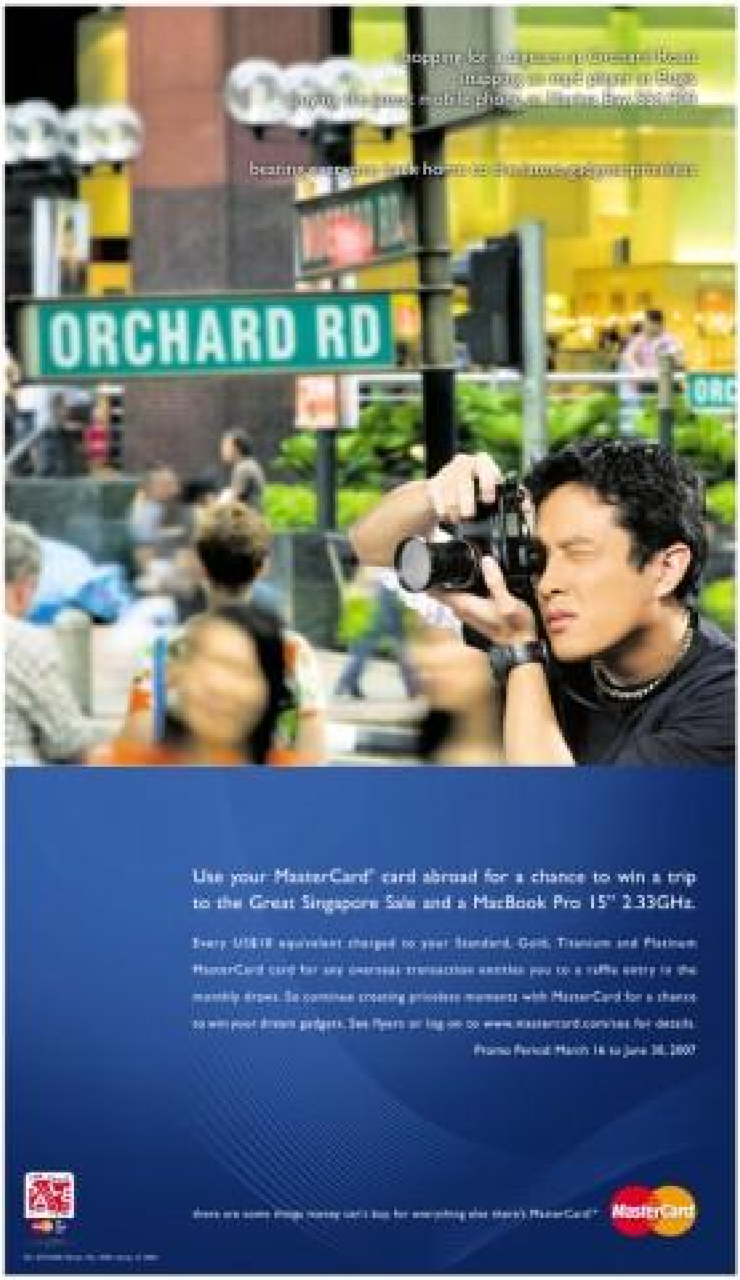
'Warming' could flood RP in future – Greenpeace

By TJ Burgonio

Solar I to stay under the sea

The Daily Gospel

Wednesday, April 4, 2007
Wednesday in Holy Week



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
OPINION

Conditioning

THE FIRST STEP TO VICTORY IS TO BELIEVE YOU will achieve it. The second step is to make others believe the same thing. But there are some victories so inexplicable as to be unbelievable.

EDITORIAL

[illegible]



The wrong type of tourist attraction

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

[illegible]

Death

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

[illegible]

The trouble with Japanese nationalism

WORLD VIEW



Francis Fukuyama

Fasting and abstinence

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

Machinery vs popularity

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

Knowing our foreign service

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo



A harsh question 20 years from now

Faith of Senator Roco's wife in people

LETTERS

Leader materials but fence-sitters during challenges

Errata



GMA turns 60 tomorrow …

Leyte villagers remember day NPAs took 36 …

INQUIRER Northern Luzon





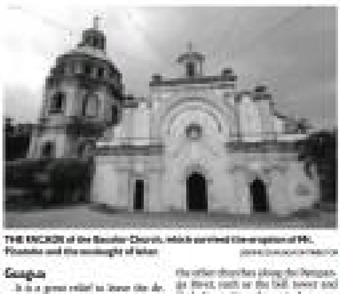
OLD PHOTOGRAPHS showing women playing roles in a cenaculo staged in Pampanga.

Lenten rites in Cutud a man's world

THE REAL-LIFE CRUCIFIXion and flagellation rites in Barangay San Pedro Cutud in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga every Good Friday have largely remained a turf of the men.

Visita Iglesia also a chance to immerse in Church culture

THE VISITA IGLESIA (VISIT of the churches) is one of the most pleasant traditions that Catholics observe during the Lenten season.



THE FACADE of the Bacolor Church, which survived the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and the onslaught of lahar.

Across the NATION

Lamppost mayors' suspension nears

CEBU CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR and Local Government (DILG) is set to implement the preventive suspension order issued by the Ombudsman against two city mayors linked to the allegedly overpriced lamppost deal.



UNEARTHED

JDV hand seen in reshuffle of cop chiefs in Pangasinan

Kuyog fest gives Cotabato folk rest from pols

Ex-immigration chief files bid for House seat



Loren says Palawan ought to get oil revenue share

DEPARTMENT of AGRARIAN REFORM

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 04

Saudi prince's $153-M investment 'vote of confidence' in RP, says GMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

Fruit of Saudi Arabia visit



PRINCE ALWALEED BIN TALAL

Aplus METRO

QC's Congress bet charged with estafa by trader

Chuck Mathay's checks bounced; aide is coaccused



CHUCK Mathay

In Manila, it's candidate for vice mayor Astals vs parking attendant

Explosives cache retrieved in building by QC police

Safe Holy Week for east Metro assured

Toby gets full support from Erap, Susan



Peewee faces disqualification case



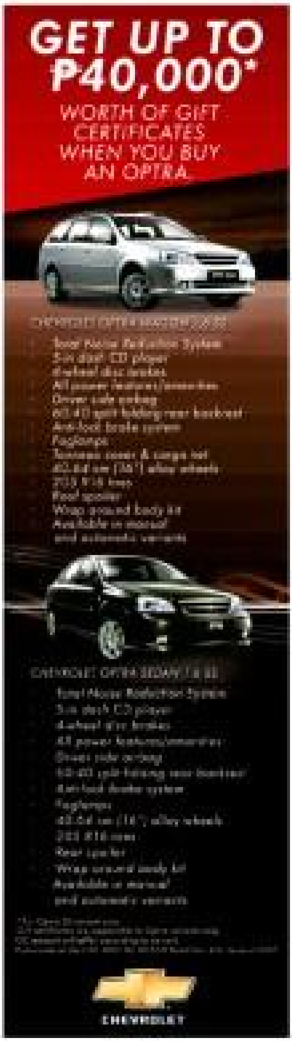
Ukraine president dissolves parliament



YUSHCHENKO

Iraqi militants set new deadline on German hostages





SC rebukes Bush administration for its inaction on global warming

WorldBriefs

Afghanistan quake

Iraq truck bomb

Ex-FBI agent missing

African peacekeepers killed

Tamil rebels killed

Britons don't trust their partners, survey reveals



Animals have sense of past, future

Remembering their food

Rats in a maze

Memories of birds

The WORLD



Death toll in Solomon tsunami climbs to 28

HONIARA, SOLOMON Islands—Survivors scavenged for food and drinking water in towns hammered by a tsunami on the Solomon Islands' west coast, while officials said the death toll was at 28 and would rise higher as they struggled to reach remote communities.



RESIDENTS walk past destroyed homes after Monday's earthquake and subsequent tsunami hit the Solomon Islands, in this image made from television, Tuesday, April 3. The quake was the strongest in the Solomons in more than three decades.

Islanders huddle on hills after tsunami

Iran, Britain start talks to resolve sailors' standoff

Sniffer dogs in third pirated DVD bust



THE TWO black Labrador dogs, Lucky and Flo sit next to the shipment of boxes containing pirated optical discs during the "Operation Double Trouble" demonstration in Sepang, Malaysia.

SPORTS

Editor: Teddyvic S. Melendres

SISNORIO DEATH

Syndicate, Thai boxing execs liable, says GAB

By [illegible] Navarro and [illegible], Contributor

A "SISNORIO SYNDICATE" ENGAGED IN THE illegal trafficking of Filipino boxers into neighboring countries as well as unscrupulous Thai boxing officials are to be blamed for the untimely death of Filipino fighter Lito Sisnorio in Thailand on Saturday.

Games and Amusements Board chair Eric Buhain said [illegible]

[illegible]



SISNORIO

[illegible]

Did they have to deal with savage Thailand?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

RP five passes initial US test

Aces seek share of lead

CARSON CITY, CALIFORNIA—The RP-San Miguel team rallied from 18 points down against the Bryon Russel-led ABA Hollywood Fame to win its first tune-up game, 98-81, Monday noon at the Home Depot Center here.



Harbour-RP sharpens up on defense, cohesiveness

Trinity rips PWU for sixth victory

ASIA'S RICHEST POOL DUEL

Orcollo out to vent wrath on rival Yang





DENNIS Orcollo (left) up against Yang Ching-shun.

Garcia pips Tiu in Quick 8 faceoff



Dimzon, Artus score braces as FEU bags Ang Liga crown

Masters hopefuls take tips from Augusta's 'guru'

Gators make it a double



JOAKIM Noah cuts down the net to celebrate the Gators' victory

Florida trumps Ohio State, bags NCAA title

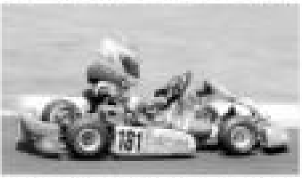
ATLANTA—WITH THE CONFETTI STILL falling, some fans in the Florida section were already thinking ahead.



FOR DAD

Harbour grabs PBA plum behind Arejola

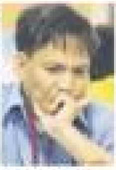
Paz heads RP archers vying in World Cup

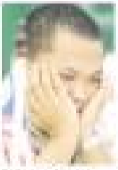


CHRISTIAN Gaddi tackles a curb on the way to a runner-up finish.

Gaddi shows promise

SPORTS







ANTONIO: Elo [illegible] TORRE: Elo [illegible] PARAGUA: Elo [illegible] SO: Elo [illegible] NAKPIL: Elo [illegible]

Antonio highest rated

So leapfrogs to 4th among Pinoys in latest Fide ratings

By Roy Luarca

[illegible]

IN THIS ISSUE

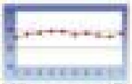
- **UCPB to bid out** savings bank /B2
- **Austria, Germany,** Czech gov'ts plan to donate MRT3 coaches /B3

BUSINESS

5 top property firms vie for prime Iloilo lot

Old airport site expected to fetch anywhere from P500M to P2.5B

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

46.17

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Shares close 0.57% higher

[illegible]



SY GO LOPEZ ZOBEL TAN

AN INTER-AGENCY PRIVAtization council yesterday pre-qualified five top property firms owned by tycoons Henry Sy, Andrew Tan and John Gokongwei, as well as the Ayala and Lopez groups, to bid for the 54-hectare airport property in Iloilo City on April 24.

[illegible]

Pag-IBIG to unload ₱15B worth of soured assets

[illegible]



UCPB to bid out savings bank

A key component of a financial restructuring plan

By Doris C. Dumlao

Megaworld '06 profit up 75%

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PhilNaRe IPO price targeted at ₱3.80

Petron profit drops to ₱6.02B

DMIA activates $9.3-M radar

5 top property ...

Pag-IBIG ...

Shares close ...

Austria, Germany, Czech gov't plan to donate MRT3 coaches

For immediate expansion of capacity, DOTC says

Last Supper menu

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Alexander C. General



Nasdaq-listed firm to put up call center

DA to expand areas planted to mangoes

MOTORING

World's leading racing parts supplier gets RP partner



By Charles E. Buban

Benefit



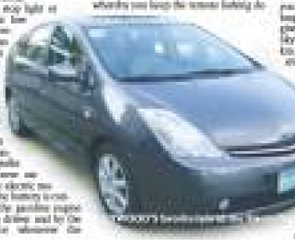
Toyota's futuristic stealth car

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza



Soaring sales



Conserve fuel

Energy flows

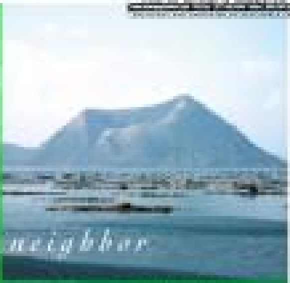




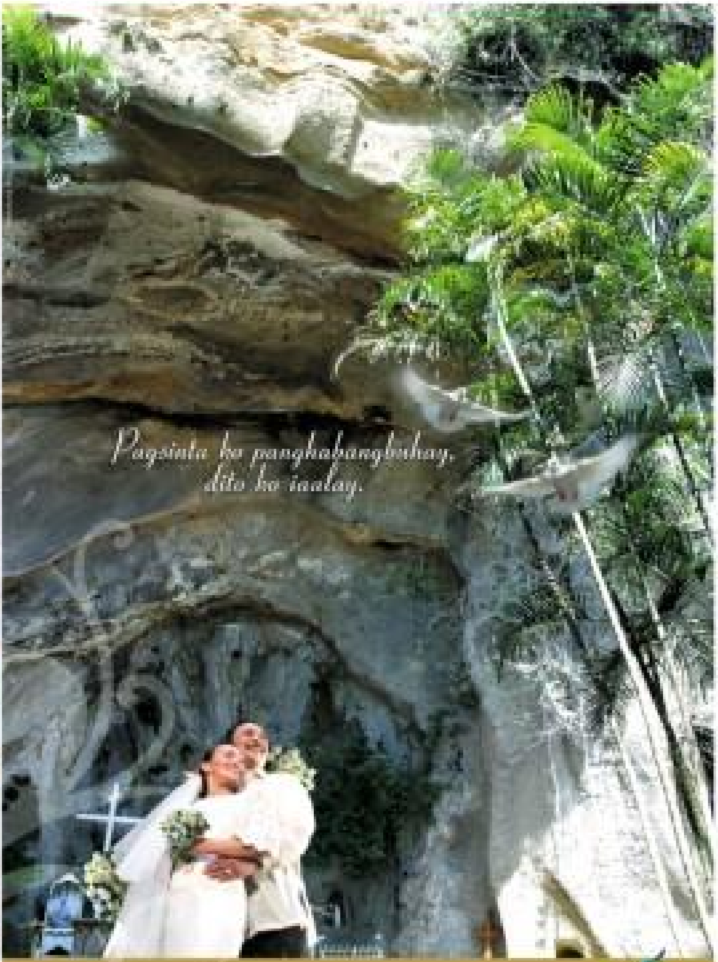
MotorScope

Carmakers offer free motorists assistance this Holy Week

Las Haciendas in Laurel, *Taal's next door neighbor*





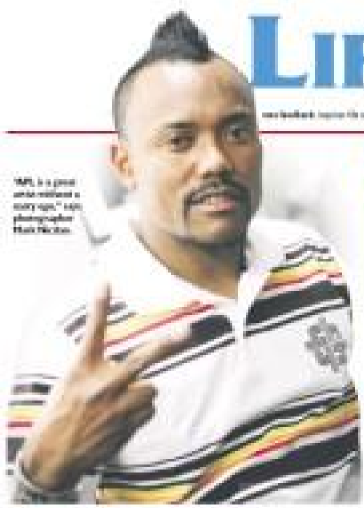








LIFESTYLE 2BU!



"APL is a great artist without a starry ego," says photographer Mark Nicdao.

Summer stylin'

2BU! kicks off the summer with hot fashion. Get an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the Human campaign shoot of our favorite Black Eyed Pea, Apl.de.ap. We also raided different stores for hot picks to keep you cool under the sun's scorching rays, and for footwear so you can keep strutting your stuff even if you feel like you're about to melt.

A 2BU! EXCLUSIVE!

Proud to be brown and human



HAIR and makeup artist [illegible] at work on Apl's mohawk

By Mike Mark M. Sablan
2BU! Correspondent
Photos by Cyrus Panganiban

EASY AND BREEZY, FUN AND flair: words that perfectly describe the pictorial of world-class Pinoy rapper Apl.de.ap for Philippine fashion brand Human.

[illegible]

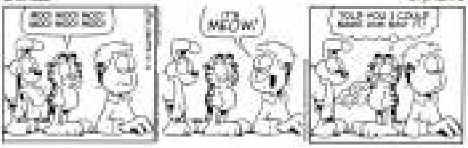


APL with fellows



[illegible]

GARFIELD



A. LIPIN



BABY BLUES

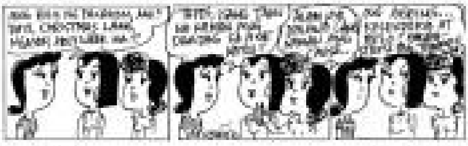


PUGAD BABOY



MUTTS



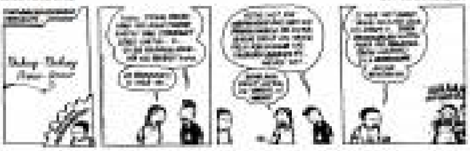


ATOMO AND WEBBY



DIVINE COMEDY

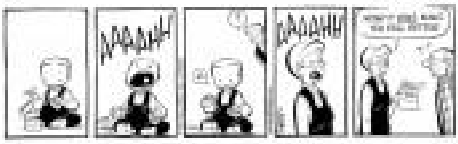






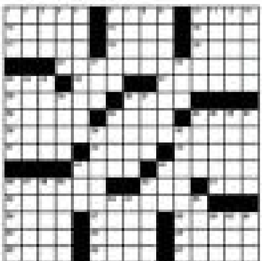
TULDOK



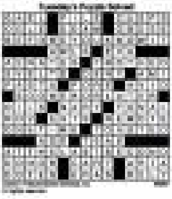


DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved



DOWN

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

				5				
			1		2			
		9				8		
		8		1		6		
	6	5				4	8	
3	4	2		8		1	5	7
		6				7		
	2	4	3		6	9	1	
5	7			9			2	6

Difficulty Level ★★★

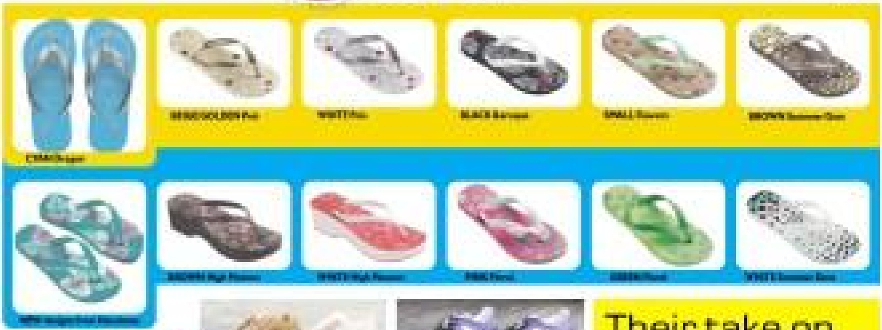
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	5	9	2	7	6	8	3	4
4	7	6	1	8	3	2	5	9
2	8	3	4	9	5	1	7	6
9	3	1	7	4	8	6	2	5
8	2	5	9	6	1	7	4	3
7	6	4	3	5	2	9	1	8
5	9	7	8	2	4	3	6	1
3	4	2	6	1	9	5	8	7
6	1	8	5	3	7	4	9	2



Step into summer





Flip flops, cool sneaks and basketball shoes you can wear on the court and off





ADMIT IT, YOU'LL USE ANY excuse to be able to shop for new shoes. We do too.









Proud to be brown and human











Their take on 'American Idol'





Inter-school cheer dance competition at mall



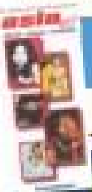




Less is more







Entertainment



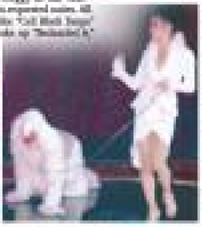
RP's gender illusionists



"WILDLY OVER THE TOP"









POCHOLO Mallillin takes the floor at curtain call.

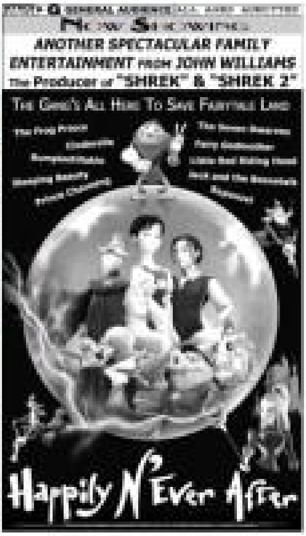
Chris 'sort of' relieved



CHRIS SLIGH

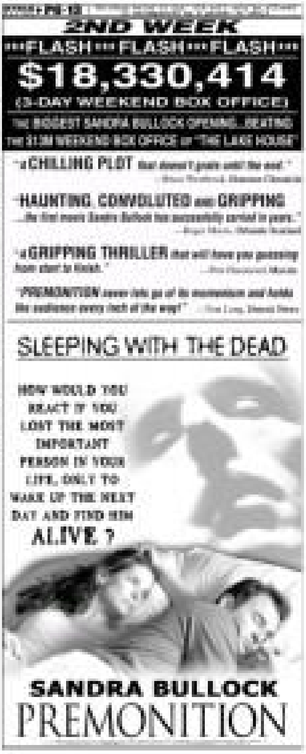
INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

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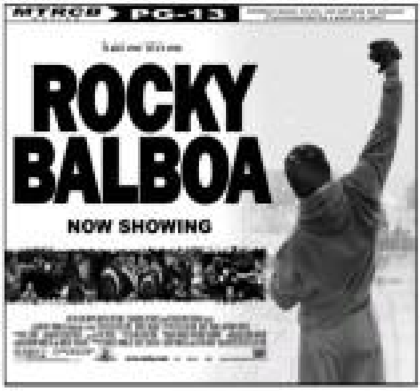


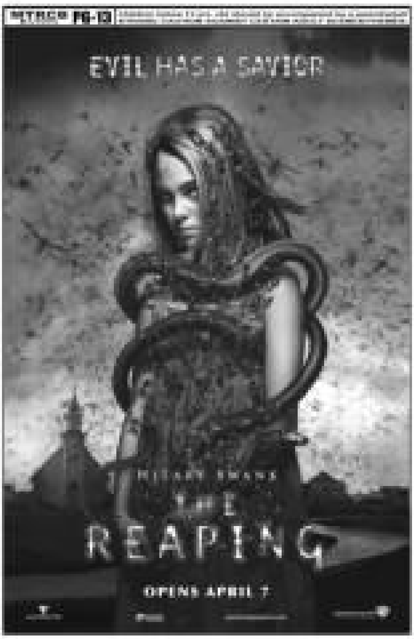


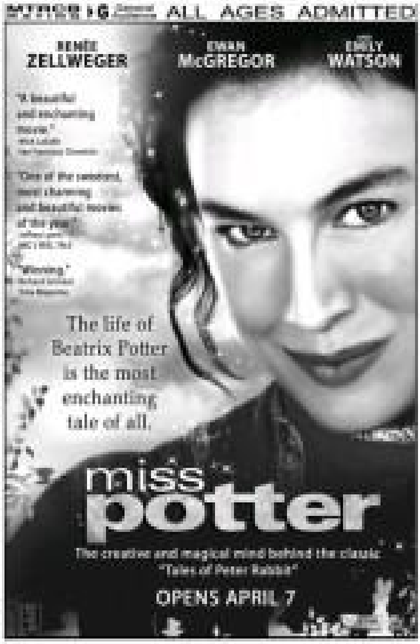
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6 PREMONITION
7 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
8 indieBine BATHHOUSE / DUDA
9 NORBIT
10 THE CHANTING



ERMITA

1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 THE GROOMSMEN
3 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
4 NORBIT / 300
5 THE CHANTING
6 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
7 PREMONITION / WILD HOGS

METRO EAST

1 NORBIT
2 300
3 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
4 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
5 PREMONITION
6 THE CHANTING
7 ROCKY BALBOA
8 WILD HOGS Sneak Preview

NOVALICHES

1 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
2 ROCKY BALBOA
3 THE CHANTING
4 PATHFINDER
5 TURISTAS
6 300

PIONEER

1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
3 PREMONITION
4 THE CHANTING

STA. ROSA

1 300
2 ROCKY BALBOA
3 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
4 ALPHA DOG
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

LIPA

1 PATHFINDER
2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 ALPHA DOG

DASMARIÑAS

1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 300
3 TURISTAS
4 ALPHA DOG
5 THE HITCHER

ANGELES

1 PATHFINDER
2 SIQUIJOR
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA

IMUS

1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 300
3 THE CHANTING
4 ZOMBIES
5 ALPHA DOG
6 SIQUIJOR

STARMILLS

1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 SIQUIJOR
3 ALPHA DOG
4 ASK THE DUST
5 PATHFINDER
6 300

BACOLOD

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 RESERVE
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 ROMIE and JULIET
6 DEAD PEOPLE 2

ILOILO

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA





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Chris 'sort of' relieved

From page D1

Little Thing the Days is Magic."

"I never came in to this [competition] wanting to win it," the Greenville, South Carolina native said.

With his baby rock background, Chris felt winning "Idol" would limit what he was really going for. In fact, he added, he almost quit "Idol" the week that he got trounced for his off-the-wall arrangement of "Endless Love." But when he learned he would be automatically dropped from AI's Top Ten even if he dropped out, he changed his mind.

Chris thinks his song choices got him in trouble early on. "In order to win, I realized I had to pick songs that I really didn't like," the 26-year-old said. Still, he deliberately made risky choices because, he said, he wanted to showcase songs he would eventually want to record.

Also, Chris can poke fun at jokes about what he describes as the show's "theater placement" contributions to his getting the lowest number of votes. He had no idea how seriously audiences took "Idol," he said, until he actually got booed for those comments.

"I hope they see," he says, "that because I joke about it and yet take part in it, I can't be too upset about 'Idol,' can I?"

Is it true you were supposed to wear the pony hawk but then Sanjaya stole your idea?

Not at all. I could never pull that off.

You were an early favorite but you kind of lost momentum. What happened?

Actually, the week I thought it was a pretty good song for my voice, and I really gave it my best. It wasn't great, but it wasn't terrible either.

You were thinking about quitting...

Honestly, I don't know if I really wanted to win, but I did want to do well, do a good job ... on my own terms.

You were playing with a band before "Idol"?

Yes [band], when I get back to South Carolina, I'm going to hook back up with my band, Half Past Forever.

What are your other immediate plans?

I've got the tour coming up this summer. I think my wife and I are going to take a much needed vacation. [And] I'm looking forward to having a normal life for a few weeks.

Did you get to have a word with the judges?

It was really cool. After the show, Simon said to me, "Chris, the reason why you're gone is


PHIL STACEY


SIMON COWELL

Simon Cowell came up to Chris and said, 'I think you're a star'

Watch "American Idol" on Star World every Wednesday and Thursday, 8 p.m. live via satellite, 8 p.m. primetime, and 11:00 p.m. replay.

THE 2007 Honda CR-V CROSSES OVER TO A NEW LEAGUE

Bonifacio Global City, Friday, March 23, 2007.

It was a tranquil night. The air was dry and somewhat warm... summer was really inching its way. As I was walking towards Bonifacio High Street I began to hear the faint crescendos of orchestral music. With my invitation at hand I briskly strode towards the exhibition area with a large, brightly lit HONDA CR-V sign emblazoned at the entrance. It felt like I just walked into an Oscars after-party, but not too tuxedo-stiff. It's a good thing I was wearing my nice clothes that night. With each pivot of my head I kept seeing familiar media personalities and those larger-than-life moguls of Philippine commerce. To describe the evening as grand is an understatement. But as I was sipping my fine wine, my feet tapping lightly to the pop-classical tunes of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, I was asking myself: "Isn't this a bit too gala for a rugged SUV?"

My question, as it turned out, was as wrong in so many ways. For one thing, this "Crossover" I kept seeing and hearing that night was not just some commercial word hype. It was the night's perfect adjective. No less. Before I got the chance to finish my third glass of wine the genteel affair suddenly crossed over into a totally different realm. I found myself bombarded with a dynamic powerhouse of music and performance. Who could've possibly imagined Ferrie Gutierrez, a renowned opera singer, belting out U2's Elevation? A barrage of wailing guitar riffs followed in the air and suddenly the familiar gritty, booming voice of Jett Pangan gutted right through the ensemble. The Dawn was there, and I found myself being sucked back to my good old head-banger days. It was an electrifying experience indeed. The music thundered louder and louder, and out came the evening's piece de resistance: three All New 2007 Honda CR-Vs rolled in from different directions, owning the red carpet with their fresh heads. I was transfixed, now oblivious to the fireworks frenzy and the cheering crowd. I was witnessing something entirely different.









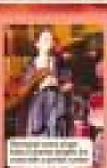


I snaked my way through the bevy of guests and media people so I can take a closer look at this awesome machine. Right off the bat, the new Honda CR-V really has a magnetic, head-turning allure. Its noticeably larger body and wider stance exudes the quintessential brawn and aggression expected of an SUV, but I can sense a roadster in the mix with its lower ground clearance and sleek, aerodynamic profile. The looks alone, not to mention those handsome 17" alloy rims tell me this machine could almost fly. It's a great blend of disciplines in design, apart from SUVs in the old school: big, boxy, and... boxy.

Slowly inching my way to the front I found myself face to face with the new CR-V's engine. It's a brilliant piece of engineering; it's an i-VTEC nonetheless. Available in 2.4-liter and 2.0-liter variants, it's needless to say that the new Honda CR-V is capable of churning out some serious muscle. This spells good news for die-hard SUV fanatics out there who always crave for raw power at their beckoning. But to harness that much power would take some very serious hardware. The new CR-V has got it covered with its Real-time 4-Wheel Drive, specially-tuned suspension system, Refined McPherson Strut and Multi-Link Double Wishbone working its magic under the carriage. I can just imagine myself behind the wheel, driving hard and fast across gravel and dirt, and not even spilling my coffee.







I had to wait for the crowd to thin out a little before I got my chance to hop into the vehicle. Once inside, the new CR-V spoke a different language altogether. It may be compact by classification, but the expansive cabin space and smartly-designed rear cargo deck state just the opposite. The full front and 60:40 split type rear seats are so comfortable it's nap-tempting. It's a very luxurious spatial everywhere I look. While I was having a ball tinkering with the metal inspired instrument panel, clicking every button and switch I could lay my hands on, I didn't draw to stopping in my favorite CD in the new CR-V's premium stereo system with 6-CD changer. Its built-in anti-theft system might not me out. Having my fill of all those amenities, I actually had to remind myself that I'm in an SUV and not in a luxury sedan. I believe that's the new CR-V's goal all along.





The Dawn was nearing the end of their set when I decided to call it a night. A faint smell of powder was what's left of the evening's grand fireworks. The three cars stood there imposingly like alpha males guarding their territory. Amidst all the revelry that ensued that night, it all boiled down to a singular fact: the All New 2007 Honda CR-V has crossed over to a new league its own.



JUSTIN Timberlake: "slimed" all over. "This is not what we rehearsed!"

Kids pick favorites

LOS ANGELES—DAKOTA FANNING: WON Favorite Female Movie Star; Adam Sandler, Favorite Male Movie Star; the Black Eyed Peas, Favorite Musical Group—and Justin Timberlake was sprayed with green slime in the early going during the 20th annual Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards.

Timberlake rode over the crowd and on to the stage on Nickelodeon's signature orange blimp, and sang, Broadway-style: "We'll never get a drop of slime on old J.T."

A fountain of the green stuff sprayed up from the stage and soaked Timberlake and his tuxedo in the song's final notes.

"This wasn't what we rehearsed!" he yelled.

Jackie Chan, Chris Tucker and Mandy Moore were also doused during the opening number.

"I consider all of you my friends!" shouted Fanning, 13, who beat out Halle Berry, Keira Knightley and Sarah Jessica Parker.

The Kids' Choice awards are Nickelodeon's ... festive celebration featuring child viewers' personal picks for best movies, music and TV shows.

The show is carried live to the East Coast from University of California, Los Angeles' Pauley Pavilion on the Nickelodeon cable network, and taped for broadcast on the West Coast and Europe, Russia, Israel, Asia, Australia and Latin America.

Kids vote online to select the winners in each category. Approximately 25 million votes were cast last year according to Nickelodeon.

A complete list of the winners:

MOVIES: Movie, "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest"; Animated Movie, "Happy Feet"; Voice from an Animated Movie, Queen Latifah, "Ice Age: The Meltdown"; Male Star, Adam Sandler; Female Star, Dakota Fanning.

MUSIC: Song, "Irreplaceable," Beyonce; Female Singer, Beyonce; Male Singer, Justin Timberlake.

TELEVISION: Show, "American Idol"; Actress, Miley Cyrus, "Hannah Montana"; Actor, Drake Bell, "Drake and Josh"; Cartoon, "SpongeBob SquarePants."

SPORTS: Athlete, Shaquille O'Neal.

OTHERS: Wannabe Award, Ben Stiller; Videogame: "SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab"; Book: "Harry Potter" (series). AP

Lenten specials

GMA NETWORK OBSERVES HOLY WEEK with special programs starting Tomorrow until Saturday.

To be aired are Regal Films' "I Will Always Love You" tomorrow, 10 p.m., and GMA Films' "Moments of Love" on Friday, 10 p.m. Other movies: "Lovestruck," Tomorrow, 5 p.m.; "Let the Love Begin," Friday, 5 p.m.; "Bituing Walang Ningning," Saturday, 5 p.m.; and "Mulawin the Movie," Saturday, 9:15 p.m.

At 10 a.m. tomorrow and Friday there is a marathon of cartoons including "Hamtaro," "Jackie Chan Adventures" and "Detective Conan."

"The Best of Wish Ko Lang" airs tomorrow through Saturday at 2 p.m.

Tomorrow afternoon's programs also include "Sang Sapi" at 2 p.m., followed by "Pinoy" at 3:30 p.m. Ending evening is it, the grand "Kaleidoscope" ... a replay of the soap's final episodes ...

Healing on RPN 9

Healing Foundation presents "You Can Be Healed," with Catholic lay evangelist and Preaching Elder of Mier Community Willy Bejer tomorrow and Friday at 11 p.m. on RPN 9.

The program provides healing for the body, soul, family and nation.

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